

Malika Abdul-Basir

From: POHL, NICHOLAS <npohl@umflint.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2012 9:38 PM
To: Malika Abdul-Basir; Rep. Wayne Schmidt (District 104)
Subject: Support for Bill 5246 - SmartZone Network Expansion

Dear Chairman Schmidt and Members of the House Commerce Committee,

As Executive Director of the Genesee Regional Association of Collegiate Entrepreneurs, I am pleased to support your initiatives concerning the expansion of the SmartZone network in Flint. Flint was made famous by local entrepreneur William C. Durant, founder of General Motors, and it's through entrepreneurship that Flint will return to it's roots and grow again.

The Genesee Regional Association of Collegiate Entrepreneurs began in 2011 with several key elements: coaching, collaborating and connecting. The goal of the organization is to facilitate connections between students at different universities and assist them in building intercollegiate teams to create businesses and grow the economy. We had our Launch Event in February 2012, and our second event in April, YouPitch Genesee. The goal of the event was for student-owned companies to pitch in a format that would prepare them to pitch to Venture Capitalists and Debt-financing institutions. Both events were a success, and several student companies went on to receive funding over the past month through Kettering's Entrepreneur Society.

Within the past 6 months, GRACE has successfully connected student entrepreneurs at Kettering University and the University of Michigan-Flint, with three intercollegiate companies forming. GRACE recognizes the value and impact the local entrepreneurial support network provides to our entrepreneurs, and we plan to continue to facilitate value-added connections to advance the region.

A SmartZone designation for the City of Flint would immensely help bridge connections between the different universities and resources within the region. This would directly impact collegiate entrepreneurs and their ability to bring awareness to their endeavors, the City of Flint and the local economy. Even more so, this designation would provide the credential in which to help market and attract more investment to our local entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Thank you again for your support of the SmartZone designation for the City of Flint. Please let us know if we can be of assistance to you in helping advance your initiatives.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Pohl, Executive Director
Genesee Regional Association of Collegiate Entrepreneurs Tel 313-618-5929 Fax 810-762-9727 www.GRACE-Event.org
<http://www.GRACE-Event.org>
1700 University Avenue
Flint, MI 48504